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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
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UNCLAS SANTO DOMINGO 000315

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR WHA/CAR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PBTS SMIG HA DR  
SUBJECT: KIDNAPPING, CATTLE-RUSTLING TREAD ON  
DOMINICAN-HAITIAN RELATIONS

REF: SANTO DOMINGO 174

¶1. (U) The recent media reports of kidnapping and cross border skirmishes in the border towns of Dajabon-Ounaminthe highlight the increasing friction between Dominicans and Haitians in this area. Tensions mounted when two Dominican men from Dajabon were kidnapped by a group of about ten armed Haitians from Ounaminthe. The two men were recovered by Haitian authorities and released on Sunday February 17 to Dominican military officials. Friction increased when a group of armed Haitian cattle-rustlers attacked a military outpost on February 27 resulting in the death of one of the Haitian attackers.

¶2. (U) Tensions elevated during the week of February 11, when a group of Haitians allegedly stole several head of cattle belonging to Dominican ranchers. In retaliation, about fifty heavily armed Dominicans crossed into Haitian territory and stole several head of cattle and horses owned by Haitians to pressure the Haitians to return their property. In response, a group of Haitians armed with shotguns, rifles, machetes and stones crossed the Rio Masacre and kidnapped Joselito Ramon Sanchez and Carlito Taveras, construction workers operating heavy machinery in the Los Cocos sector of Dajabon.

¶3. (SBU) Haitian police recovered the two kidnapped men and Haitian Consul Jean Baptiste Bien-Aime facilitated their release to Dominican army and border control (CESFRONT) officials on Sunday February 17. Embassy sources reported that the Dominicans reinforced CESFRONT with 200 soldiers in the area and deployed them on enhanced patrols to prevent further escalation.

¶4. (U) An editorial in the newspaper "Listin Diario" highlighted the absence and indifference of Dominican diplomats in resolving the issue, pointing out that it was Dominican military officials, army and CESFRONT, who cooperated and coordinated with Haitian authorities.

¶5. (U) On February 27 a group of armed Haitians attacked a military outpost in Sanche in the province of Dajabon. The media characterized the attackers as cattle-rustlers, who have allegedly been stealing cattle from Dominican ranchers. CESFRONT repelled the attack killing one of the attackers. A Dominican mixed commission comprising of the army and CESFRONT as well as Haitian Public Ministry and Police officials from Fort Liberte are investigating the incident.

¶6. (SBU) Comment: Dominican-Haitian relations in the border regions, especially in Dajabon-Ounaminthe have been

increasingly strained recently. Given the recent ban by Haiti of Dominican egg and poultry products due to the threat of avian flu (Ref A) and the corresponding Dominican boycott of market day, these incidents of cattle-rustling, armed incursions, an attack on a military outpost and kidnapping have done little to ease tensions. However, the quick response by Haitian authorities to recover and return the kidnapped victims, and the Dominican military's reinforcement of CESFRONT troops are thus far controlling momentarily increasing border tensions. End Comment.

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